

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-9 and 15 are pending in this application. Claim 9 stands withdrawn. By this Amendment, claim 15 is added. No new matter is added.

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 3-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) or §103(a) over JP 2002-085922 to Yoshida. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites that the oxide fibers [in the bonding layer] satisfy the relational expression  $1.0 \leq L \times (W / D)/100 \leq 7.3$ . The Office Action asserts that Yoshida discloses this range. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that Yoshida discloses values and ranges of values for each of the variables in the recited equation. The Office Action asserts that these ranges can be combined in such a fashion to encompass the range recited in claim 1. As such, the Office Action asserts that Yoshida discloses the range.

However, this assertion lacks merit because Yoshida fails to disclose the recited range with sufficient specificity. The MPEP states that a reference must disclose a range with "sufficient specificity" in order to anticipate the range. See MPEP §2131.03. But Yoshida does not disclose the recited range with sufficient specificity because Yoshida does not disclose the importance of the ratio disclosed in claim 1.

Yoshida only discloses the various variables contained in equation 1, of claim 1, individually. Specifically, Yoshida allegedly discloses values and ranges for the variables L, W and D. But Yoshida never discloses that it is desirable or important to choose any given one of these variables in order to have them specifically conform to a ratio. The failure to specifically identify the importance of these variables chosen in combination with each other prevents Yoshida from disclosing the recited feature with sufficient specificity. Thus, Yoshida does not disclose or render obvious the subject matter recited in claim 1.

Claims 3-8 are patentable over Yoshida at least in view of the patentability of claim 1, from which they depend, as well as for additional features they recite. Accordingly,

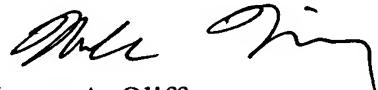
withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 3-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claim 15 is also in condition for allowance. Claim 15 recites that "the bonding material does not contain a silane coupling agent." By contrast, Yoshida discloses that its bonding agent does contain a silane coupling agent. See Yoshida, paragraph [0018]. Claim 15 is also in condition for allowance based on its dependence from claim 1, for the reasons discussed above.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Request for Continued Examination  
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: July 13, 2009

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